

News Release

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Hosts Cultural Treasures Day Celebration

Refuge Manager Lou Hinds invites you to celebrate *Cultural Treasures Day* at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, April 4, 2009. You won't want to miss the special activities taking place, one at 10:00 a.m. and another at 1:00 p.m.

Everyone is encouraged to call or stop by the Herbert H. Bateman Educational and Administrative Center to learn more about specifics of the day. On the day of the event, a large tent will be set up near the Assateague Lighthouse and in the parking lot of the refuge visitor center to accommodate the large crowd which is anticipated. Please arrive early for both events, if you want a close parking space or a front row seat. We welcome you to come early and stay all day!

By attending the morning event, you will get a sneak peak of the historic Assateague Lighthouse prior to it being re-opened for the 2009 summer season. Those with a keen interest in historical things will be delighted by the opportunity to closely examine some of the recently removed damaged pieces, discover the extensive nature of the restoration process and learn firsthand what progress has been made.

Stay put for the ceremony that recognizes the Chincoteague Natural History Association and Refuge Volunteers as official Lighthouse Keepers of today, who strive, daily, to reveal to us the special meanings that this place holds.

You won't want to miss the afternoon unveiling of a new exhibit that recalls and honors a maritime event involving the *La Galga*, which resonates still today in Spanish and American History. The exhibit showcases a large scale model of the Spanish Warship. This model was painstakingly built by a local artisan over a two year period and will become a temporary exhibit on display at the Bateman Center. The La Galga was shipwrecked on Assateague Island in 1750, during a hurricane, and most likely gave rise to one of the current legends, perhaps explaining how the world famous Chincoteague ponies first arrived.

These are just a few examples of what will occur on Saturday, April 4th. *Cultural Treasures Day*

provides many reasons to be festive. During your stay, we hope you will immerse yourself in the rich natural and cultural history of Chincoteague and Assateague Island, drawing strength and memorable experiences from the voices of those who came before us.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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